

LINES OF DEVOTION

(Songs of Saint Tyagaraja)

By
A.V.S.SARMA

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FOREWARD

Saint Tyagaraja needs no introduction in South India. His superb and ecstatic devotional music reverberates in every home and is the basic cultural heritage into which every child is born. As Shri Sarma has rightly noticed, it is extremely difficult to bring out, by any translation, the full import and effect of Saint Tyagaraja inspired compositions. How far Shri Sarma has succeeded in his effort and whether his poetic rendering is immaculate is more than I can pretend to judge for not having had the necessary qualifications for the same. But of this I am sure, Shri Sarma, who is well-known to me for years, is a gentleman whose day-to-day life is inspired by a deep and unostentatious, devotional urge and faith in God. His rendering of Saint Tyagaraja songs is the devotional offering of that urge and will be warmly received by Him and all who have faith in Him.

5, York Place,
New Delhi,
11-06-1954.

(Sd.) B. JAGANNADHA DAS,
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PREFACE

The lines of devotion are written in blank verse and meant to convey the noble ideas contained in some of the ennobling kritis (devotional songs) of saint Tyagaraja. The work is difficult and what has been realized is probably a poor performance. Nevertheless the publication of this book has this excuse, that the writer having enjoyed the spirit of some of the kritis thought it is duty to record the resultant feelings of personal inspiration in English language. My mistakes will be many and may be kindly condoned.

Dr. C.NARAYANA RAO has distinguished himself in a unique way with his “SONGS OF TYAGARAJA” a task similar to that, which is now my humble choice. By a perusal of his work I have gained strength. This stimulus sustained me during my study of the original compositions of Saint Tyagaraja.

In some kritis, allusions have been many; refer to the famous epics of our land and our religion. I have chosen to include in my renderings only a few of the important allusions. This preserves ease in reading and understanding of issues, particularly to those unfamiliar to oriental wisdom.

An account of the life of the great saint is also given in this publication as it is providing the world of great purposes in Tyagarajaswami contributions.

The first line of the original kriti is transliterated into English script under “Contents” so that the reader may correlate the lines rendered into English meter by the writer.

My sons A.V.NAGARJUNA SARMA and A.V.SEETHARAMA SARMA have gone through the proofs diligently and have thus helped me in the preparation of this book.

Sri P. RAGHAVENDRA RAU, Manager, The Antiseptic Press, has kindly helped me to bring out this book and to him my thanks are due.

“VIJAYA DHWAJAM,”
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Madras-17, India
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A.V.S. SARMA

LIFE OF SAINT TYAGARAJA

Ardent devotees of the Lord have delivered to the world during their inspired moments, divine music charged with ennobling bliss and enriched with nectar like sweetness.

To name some of them are the Alvars, Nayanars, Ramalingaswami, Thayumanavar, Muthu Thandavar, Arunagirinathar, Purandaradas, Kabir, Tulasi Das, and Guru Nanak.

In Carnatic music, trinity is composed of Dikshitar, Tyagaraja and Syama Sastry. Tyagaraja was a devotee of Sri Rama and his songs poured out as affectionate worship of the God. Dikshitar had bliss from Sri Subrahmanya, and his music reached unapproachable heights of excellence. Syama Sastry had boons from Kamakshi Devi and gave to the world his enchanting music.

Saint Tyagaraja belonged to Bharadwajagotra, a Mulikanati or Aruvelu Niyogi Brahmin. His grand father, Giriraju Brahman hailed from Kakarla village, Kumbum Taluq, Kurnool district, and settled in Tiruvarur village, Tanjore district, about the year 1600 A.D. and earned royal esteem as a musician. He had five sons and of them one by name Rama Brahman had the rare privilege of begetting the saint Tyagaraja (1767 A.D). Tyagaraja had two brothers. Early education of the saint was at Tiruvarur, and subsequent studies were in Tiruvayyar, which is situated at the junction of five holy rivers, the Kaveri, the Kolladam, the Kudumurutti, the Vennar and the Vettar.

Tyagaraja studied the depths of Sanskrit lore for four years in the school of Govinda Dikshitar at Tiruvayyar and mastered the epics. Valmiki's Ramayana was sweetest to our saint. The parents grew gradually aware of the growing grandeur of the musical prodigy in their son Tyagaraja who easily composed kritis esteemed by elderly and learned contemporaries. The sense, sound and sweetness of the songs were inimitable.

The father entrusted his son to the famous Sonti Venkataramanayya, the court musician of Tanjore. The gifted pupil learnt all that was possible from the master in music, and further became Godly-minded, always chanting the name of Sri Rama as per instructions of Rama Krishnanandaswami. The pupil's kritis were scrutinised by the great master who approved them as perfect, but many doubts lingered in Tyagaraja and therefore he was advised to pray to sage Narada. The sage answered the profound prayers by presenting "*Swararnavam*" which was an apt solution for the situation. In time, the master permitting, the pupil returned home completely blessed and equipped with blissful knowledge. Tyagaraja attained mastery in vocal and instrumental music, astrology and mathematics.

Tyagaraja married Parvati who died prematurely, only five years later. The desire of the Parvati was that her sister Kamalamba should replace her. Her husband acceded this to this wish. The fruit of their union was a daughter Sitalakshmi, who in due course was wedded to Kuppuswaayya. This couple bore a son named Tyagaraja who was also gifted with musical talent but lived for only thirty years. Thus the mortal lineage ended but the immortal heritage of the divine compositions lives and shines with glorifying halo eternally.

Tyagaraja devoted himself of the Lord ever and Sri Rama appeared to him one day along with Lakshmana as if starting to save the divine practices of sage Viswamitra. At this juncture he sang: "*Ela ne daya radu...*"

Tyagaraja had to break up from the brothers who thought him useless for life and received as his share of family property, the idols of Sita, Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha, Satrugna and Hanuman. He worshipped daily as divine inmates of his house with daily offerings. His thought, world and deed were dedicated to the Lord.

Music shall not be divorced from devotion and if so was always out of his scope of perception. Tyagaraja angrily chided his pupils when once they had indulged in light-hearted songs but were excused finally with the intervention of his wife. She pleaded that the rose has to be picked free of the thorns and everything human is not perfect. Purification and higher

achievement were possible through their master's preaching. At that moment Tyagaraja sang: "*Santamu leka saukhyamu ledu.*"

The daily life of Tyagaraja included prayers, rest, and on important sacred days, fasting was also in vogue. Sri Ramanavami, Janmashtami and Vaikunta Ekadasi were days for extraordinary prayers and festive occasions. He had no distinction in regard to religious faiths or languages or castes. Once or twice a week the master and his pupils went round the streets of the village singing to the accompaniments. The residents were presented with superhuman divine songs and these sojourns fulfilled the daily needs of the selfless singers. The master sang to the Lord and not at all for the acquisition of earthly possession. While inspiration and spiritual communion with Sri Rama were important to Tyagaraja, when full looked flushed and serene. His pupils quickly recorded all that flooded in torrents from his lips. Songs sung by other saints like Ramadas, Purandaradas and Jayadeva, the great master also vocalized. Tyagaraja trained his pupils in music, astrology and mathematics, and never received any remuneration.

King Sarabhoja, a champion of art and music ruled Tanjore. At one of the daily musical performances by Sonti Venkataramanayya, Tyagaraja was losing himself in appreciative bliss and then was summoned to sing. He sang: "*Dorakunaituvanti seva...*" in an exquisite way, and elicited the fond response from Sonti Venkataramanayya himself in: "*Dorakuna ituvanti sishyudu...*"

At one time Sonti Venkataramanayya of Tanjore desired that his father to hear his pupil Tyagaraja sing. When the three met, that day happened to be one fixed for the congregation of musicians in the royal palace for a festival. Therefore, the house of Sonti Venkataramanayya was packed with musicians. Tyagaraja sang and sang till late that day captivating every one and the evening appointment in the palace was lost track of. The king, when informed of this extraordinary event desired to hear Tyagaraja, who refused to accede to the royal demand of a court performance. He sang: "*Nidhi chala sukhama, Ramuni sannidhi seva sukhama...*" The king yearning to teach a lesson ordered Tyagaraja to his court, and immediately developed an agonising colic in the abdomen. Soon realising his mistake, the king went in person to the Tyagaraja and prayed for forgiveness. In response had spontaneous relief. The great singer refused gifts and lived as a poor man. Ganapati (Walajapet Venkataramanayya) was a constant devotee of Tyagaraja. Humble and courteous was the response to all those who came into his contact, as universal respect was the rule and practice of this great saint.

Swatiturunal, King of Travancore, requested Tyagaraja through the services of Isai Vellala Vadivel, one of his court musicians, to honour a royal occasion with music, thus deriving a personal status. Refusal was prompt and the saint sang. "*Padavine sadbhakti kalyuta.*" The messenger in reply to the king's demand sang the same in the court.

Tyagaraja is the musical and devotional twin of the pious poet Bammara Potana. Very close similarity exists between the inspired kirtanas of Ramadas, the poetry of Potana and the devotional songs of Tyagaraja. Prahlada Bhakta Vijayam, Novkacharitam and Seetha Rama Vijayam are also to the credit of the saint.

Once Govinda Marar of Travancore visited Tyagaraja and introduced himself as a devotee of Sri Rama. Marar sang to the heart's content of Tyagaraja on the Tamboora for hours and hours without a stop. He earned the name of Govindaswami with the capacity of limitless music. The famous kriti "*Endaro Mahanu Bhavulu...*" was then sung by Tyagaraja. These along with four other kritis form the five gems, all timeless and offer the greatest appeal to all.

At one time, the envious brother of Tyagaraja threw the idols of his daily worship into the depths of the flooding Kaveri as the latter remained poor and refused all royal recognition and court favours. This brought sorrow, which drove the great savant to a pilgrimage. One night Rama appeared in dream and told Tyagaraja the spot of his watery residence, where from the idols were recovered and then the song flowed out: “*Rara ma intiduka...*” To this day the idols are preserved in the house of Varahappa Iyer in South Street, Tanjore. Again, while on his way to Kanchi visited his old and endearing pupil Venkataramanayya at Walajapet. Later Tyagaraja visited Kanchi and had the blessings from Upanishad swami, the Guru of his father. He had darshan of Ekambareswara, Varadaraja and Kamakshidevi, and returned to Walajapet.

The saint did not accept any gifts even at the time of his daughter’s wedding, except a picture of Sri Rama painted by Pallavi Elliah, the pupil of Walajapet Venkataramanayya and sang on the receipt of the painting, “*Nanu palimpa nadachi vachitavo...*” he accepted this and danced with ecstasy. Later Tyagaraja visited Tirupathi and offered prayerful songs at the feet of Lord Venkateswara. Later, while near about Puttur temple, he sang seeing the plight a drowned and dead devotee who later came back to life. “*Loka vanachuta...*” “*Emanathi ichuvo...*” “*Najivadhara...*”.

The prayer hall built by Sundaresa Mudaliar at Kovur got burnt accidentally. Hearing of this the great pilgrim sang: “*Evarito ne delpdu...*”.

After visiting Tiruvottiyur, Tyagaraja came to Madras and lodged with Sundaresa Mudaliar, who funded with a thousand rupees for Sri Rama worship, and organized this plan with the attendants. While on the trip, robbers hit them at night and when Tyagaraja was about to hand the money to them and then proceed peacefully. Then a pupil, Tanjore Rama Rao reminded the master that the money belonged to the Lord. Then he sang: “*Mundu venuka Iruprakkala todi murakhara rara...*” as a result Sri Rama and Lakshmana escorted the palanquin of the master all the night. Early in the morning, the robbers prayed for pardon describing the divine guides. Tyagaraja, on hearing this congratulated the robbers and felt sad not being fortunate to see the divine guards himself.

Tyagaraja continuing his pilgrimage visited Tiruchi, Srirangam, Rameswaram, Madurai and other places. On returning to Tiruvayyar, Tyagaraja was besieged by many to share rich spoils but got in return poor gifts. He then sang: “*Sriramuni kripaye sirulakanniti siri...*”. The saint built an edifice on the stale foundation laid by Purandaradas. He did not sanction early importance to elaboration of ‘Pallavi’ by his pupils.

In 1845 Kamalamba passed away and Tyagaraja became a ‘*Sanyasi*’. He preached emphatically that the root of music is devotion and songs bore fruit with eternal bliss. He sang: “*Giripai nelakonna...*” and became Tyagarajaswami. Having had a prior vision when Sri Rama revealed to him his remaining span of life, Tyagaraja sang on the last day. “*Paritapamu gani yodina palukulanumarchitavo...*” and freed himself from mortal coils (in 1847 or 1848). A divine light emanating from the saint disappeared into the idol of Sri Rama.

The saint was returned to dust beside the remains of his revered master Sonti Venkataramanayya.

Tyagaraja’s music merits worship because he saturated it with devotion and exemplified with his life as a road to eternal bliss.

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AP

LINES OF DEVOTION

1. Jagadananda - O Lord of Sita, king of king from Sun.
2. Thudukugala-Who will reform this sinning man, but Thee?
3. Sadhinchene-O mind! The Lord appears to miss path right!
4. Kanakana ruchira-The more I feast my eyes on Thee with glee.
5. Endaro-My salutations to the Godly souls.
6. Andundakane-O Lord! Give promise of Thy quick return!
7. Atu karadani-O Ram! How can I bear! Show mercy sweet.
8. Adigi sukhamu-Who ev'r asked Thee a boon has come to grief!
9. Adi kadu bajana-O mind! Devotion is not that when thoughts
10. Anyayamu-Be fair and draw me near to Thee O Lord!
11. Appa Rama Bhakti-Devotion to God Gana is supreme!
12. Anandasagara-Existence human is weight on earth.
13. Aaragimpave-Do drink the milk with cream and taste O Lord!
14. Inta saukhyamani-What happy ecstasies are enjoy'd by those.
15. Upacharamulanu-Accept my service Ram, while on Sesha!

16. Unnathavuna-The thunder, rain, and wind have drawn the boat.
17. Undedhi Ramudu-There is one God, O mind, don't waver once!
18. Etulabrothuvo-How wilt Thou save me, O Ram, divine?
19. Ennaga manasuku-The eyes are set to see Thy form alone!
20. Evarani nirnainchiri ra-How have souls great identified Thee, Ram?
21. Epaniko-My birth has purpose of chants, songs and praised.
22. Entani ne-How shall I sing description of the luck.
23. Oka mata-O mind! Remember Rama for one word.
24. Kadale vadu-O Rama Thou are still in pace supreme!
25. Giripai nelakonna-Seen with my eyes, God Ram, on Bhadradri.
26. Gitardhamu-The meaning of the Gita and the joy
27. Chakkani raja-There is path royal open to Thee, mind!
28. Gnana mosaga rade-Give me the purity of God-though, O Ram!
29. Tera teyaga rada-Venkataramana! Remove the blind.
30. Dwaitamu sukhama-Of Dwaita, which gives the bliss?
31. Naya momu-Thy smiling face is missing long, O Ram!
32. Nannu palimpa-Did Thou reach down on foot to Thy savant?
33. Nada loludai-Ragas and swaras seven, their yields
34. Nada thanu Nadam, the essence of Sama Veda.
35. Nadu pie palikeru-The people speak of me that I divide.
34. Nadu pie palikeru-The people speak of me that I divide.
35. Nadu pie palikeru-The people speak of me that I divide.

36. Nija marmamulanu-O Lord! why tempt those that know the inner truths?
37. Nidhi chala-The family with wealth shall not excel.
38. Ne nendu vedhakudura-And now where shall I search for Thee, O God?
39. Padavi ne-Devotion to Ram attains status high!
40. Patti viduva-Take not Thy grip from me O Ram! Take not!
41. Bhuvini dosuda ne-Did I with avarice give vent to lies?
42. Manasa etulo-O mind, bare with to devote to Ram!
43. Manasu nilpa-When mind is not on God, how then can bells.
44. Manasu swadheena-The man who wins ov'r mind needs none of chants!
45. Rara ma inti daka-O Ram, do come to my abode and stay!
46. Lalite Sri-Lalita, seat of beauty, wisdom.
47. Vara sikhi-Subrahmanya, with seat on peacock, fair.
48. Santamu leka-No happiness exists without the peace.
49. Sri Narada-O Narada! To lotus of Nadam Thou art.
50. Sangita gnanamu-Devotion saturating music sweet.
51. Seethamma ma yamma-My mother Sita, and my father Ram.
52. Kshinami Tiruga-One death leads to one more rebirth, O mind!
53. Intakanna Ananda-To sing and pray it teams before the Lord.
54. Elavataramu-O Rama! Why hast Thou come down to earth?
55. Raghunayaka-I hold Thy lotus feet for ev'r O Ram!
56. Sudha madhurya bhashana-Thy name ambrosia-like and nectar-rich.
57. Valla gadanaka-Say not nay Sita! Save thy servant soon!
58. Rama abhirma-O Rama! Lotus-eyed, I love Thee full!
59. Neke teliyaka-It Thou know it not, what can I do then?
60. Vadera-O mind! He is the God who keeps His words?
61. Amma ravamma-Come mother Tulsi, to me as I adore.
62. Kanta judume-O Rama! cost Thy look on me but once.
63. Teliya leri Rama-The path of true devotees is missed by those.
64. Ela ni daya radu-Delay not Ram! Shed mercy now on me!
65. Emanatichevvo-What is Thy mind? What is judgement Thine?
66. Dorakuna ituvanti seva-Is it within my humble reach to serve.
67. Loke vana chathura-Protector of the cosmos great! Protect.
68. Najivadhara-O spark divine of life in me that lives!

69. Evaritho ne-To whom shall I tell my tale of woe?
70. Mundu venuka-Ram! Follow us, both fore and rear, as guards.
71. Paritapamu kani-The golden boat was in the Sarayu.
72. Aparadhamula mannpi-Give me Thy pardon kind and draw me near!

LINES OF DEVOTION

I Jagadananda - O Lord of Sita, king of king from Sun.

O Lord of Sita, king of kings from Sun;
 The thief of milk and curd, sweet-tong'd, O Lord
 Of Lakshmi, seat on Sesha or Garuda!
 Brahma is son to Thee whom Siva praises!
 The sea God and Vali fell before Thee!
 Thou art the pow'r and joy of universe!
 And lesser Gods as Moon hold away ov'r stars!
 With Sun and Moon as eyes, of azure hue,
 Ador'd by Vanaras and Hanuman
 Thy life is in the hearts of Poets of truth!
 Ambrosia from lotuses of vedas is Thine!
 Thou art the parrot in the cage of OM,
 The birth of epic lore, the seat of love,
 The hero of Valmiki, the sages and saints,
 And conqueror of sin and rakshasas!
 The trinity is Thine and Thy law hast:
 "Create protect destroy, and thus cosmos turns!

II Thudukugala-Who will reform this sinning man, but Thee?

Who will reform this sinning man but Thee?
 Beyond poor human comprehension Thou
 Art shining in Thy Lakshmi's heart and Thou
 Art omnipresent and protecting all!
 The thought of God left me while young and I
 Have preach'd the joy on earth like singers and
 Immoral lovers by enticing girls
 And earning gold and with heart, hard and proud,
 Forgetting music sweet in praise of Thee!
 My eyes do feast on wife and house and son
 And wealth but have lost sight of Thy feet, Lord!
 The birth as man is rare and forgetting this
 A champion of villains' cold, I am,
 With lust and pride and wealth, on earth!
 My worship goes now to Thy lotus feet!
 Come, come and save me like parent fond!

III Sadhinchene-O mind! The Lord appears to miss path right!

O mind! the Lord appears to miss path right
 He acts in His own way and speaks to suit
 Event and time! As Krishna Thou hast pain'd
 Thy parents seeking liberation prompt!

The targets of fun were Gopikas
 Whose love evol'd as the devotion chaste
 Thou smil'd when mother Yasoda kiss'd Thee!
 And soon reveal'd to her the universe!
 Thou, home of traits good; art cure for sin!
 Ram, fountain of love; Thou art in souls great
 A king of kings; and babe dear to devotees!
 Thou took my worship and ordain'd the path
 Devotees take but spoke to suit the time!
 Thy words to me "Be calm: join not with wrong;
 Forget all pain," are sweet but Thou art far!

IV Kanakana ruchira-The more I feast my eyes on Thee with glee.

The more I feast my eyes on Thee with glee
 The more Thy charming face entrances my soul!
 Thy dress of gold shines like morn Sun!
 I love to se Thy face as Sita looks
 At Thee with eyes stealthy, and with stance shy,
 As Thou stand'th deck'd with crown on head and rows.
 On neck, of chains with scintillating gems.
 Did not young Dhruva pray and get Thy boon?
 Did not Jatayu seek Thee for last rites?
 Thy Queen found solace from description Thine
 By pious Hanuman who flew over seas!
 The home of joy, the foe of evil dark
 Residing in souls great with traits supreme
 Reposing on Garuda, and armed with wheel
 That shall destroy the mightiest with ease,
 Thou art ador'd by Siva, Parvati,
 Sita, Narada, Parasara, Sunaka,
 Purandara, Suka, as spring of bliss!

V Endaro-My salutations to the Godly souls.

My salutations to Godly souls
 Like Siva, Prahlada, Brahma,
 Sun Moon, Narada, Tumburu, and saints!
 Those who enjoy at heart the bliss of God!
 Those who win ov'r the mind, and see the light!
 Those who love dedication to the Lord!
 Those who sing and walk in the path of truth!
 Those who imbibe beatitude divine!
 Those who are lost in depths of ecstasy!
 Those who are heavenly in head and heart;
 Those who know Thee erase faiths false and mean,
 As Gita, Ramayana, Bhagavatha,
 Upanishads, and Vedic lore are roads
 Of Ram who plays in them with joy supreme!
 Those who view in religions and faiths, one God!
 Those who exist, devot'd thus, shall live long!
 My salutations to those mightily souls
 Whose love of Ram exists in triple strength!

FIVE GEMS

The foregoing five pieces are known as the five gems created by Tyagarajaswami.

Each song depicts the incarnation of God like Rama or Krishna in human and divine aspects in such perfection that ancient and hoary lore may be said to be completely reflected in these great kritis. Rama is as good an ideal as Krishna; in short, the supreme is viewed as one entity, protecting everything else.

As Valmiki produced the classic epic of Ramayana, Tyagaraja sang his famous kirtanas embodying mainly the events of Sri Rama's life and made them eternally powerful and deeply appealing. They contain descriptions of devotion, romance, chivalry and mercy apart from apt reproductions of natural beauty set by gorgeous mountains, laughing rivers, roaring seas, beautiful gardens, and prosperous cities. The language is dignified in sense and sweet in melody; and conveys forcefully the aim and accomplishment of wedding devotion to music.

Adoration of Rama is the theme of all the music of Tyagaraja who has rendered the five gems particularly in extraordinarily potent ragas. The happiness derived by the singing of any one of these five gems is piously comparable to that of a child at his mother's breast or the longed union of devoted lovers or better still, to the communion of 'atma' with 'Paramatma.'

VI Andundakane-O Lord! give promise of Thy quick return!

O Lord! give promise of Thy quick return!
What can I do if Thou forgot Thy word?
When I desire Thee, Thou hast to live
In my heart; if not tears flood and fell me down!

VII Atu karadani-O Ram! How can I bear! Show mercy sweet.

O Ram! How can I bear! Show mercy sweet.
Advice by Thee I follow day to day.
How blame comes hard on me when I live true
To teachings of the ethic epics chaste!

VIII Adigi sukhamu-Who ev'r asked Thee a boon has come to grief!

Whoever has asked Thee a boon has come to grief!
O Ram, Thy Queen wished to see hermits old
In woods, and Thou exiled her when big
With babe, without compunction, mercy small!
The Rakshasi said love to Thee and lost
Her nose and ears, at once! Saint Narada
Spoke love to Thee and earn'd transformation to
A woman and bore sixty sons of fame!
Sage Durvasa asked food of Pandavas
In exile, poor, and found the stomach full
By power of Thy grace! Great Devaki pray'd
For Thee as her child sweet, but Yasoda
Had answer prompt with Thy joy in her arms!
The Gopikas prayed for realisation of
Their longings, but had separation sore!
Thy secrets are now out! Wilt Thou save me

Or not? Thy action is too deep to scan!

IX Adi kadu bajana-O mind! Devotion is not that when thoughts

O mind! devotion is not that, when thoughts
Are there but deeds go wrong!
Men do some acts for name and fame, and such
Is not devotion for Thee! Beware O mind!

X Anyayamu-Be fair and draw me near to Thee O Lord!

Be fair and draw me near to Thee O Lord!
Thy pardon came to mortals soaked in sin!
As Jadabharatha rear'd babe of deer;
As tortoise Thou bore sinking Mandara;
As Dharmaraja excus'd Asvathama,
Who slay'd the sleeping babes of Pandavas!
Do save my ailing brother and be kind!

XI Appa Rama Bhakti-Devotion to God Rama is supreme!

Devotion to God Rama is supreme!
Stop wavering in me; guard as eyelids!
Thy Queen pray firm! Lakshmana serves!
Prince Bharatha stakes throne for Rama's feet!
Poor Sabari feeds Thee! Siva sings praise!
Devot'd stout, Hanuman sweeps ov'r seas deep!
Thy innocent savant longs bliss from Thee!

XII Anandasagara-Existence human is weight on earth.

Existence human is weight on the earth,
If one swims not in depth is azure of joy!
The songs devotional in sense bear bliss!
Gods who create, protect, destroy thus sand
And showed the world divinity in the tunes
That emanate from inner self-Nadam.

XIII Aragimpave-Do drink the milk with cream and taste O Lord!

Do drink the milk with cream and taste O Lord!
Eat, do eat, feast with rice and sweets and dine
In full with brothers and Thy consort chaste!
Ad sanctity shall reach my hands enfolded!
What happy ecstasies do those enjoy?
Who chant the name of Rama nectar-like!
All those that conquer self and love the Lord,
Sita, and great Siva, who combines sweet

Ambrosia of swaras, Raya, Laya
With candy sugar of the name of Ram!

XIV. Inta saukhyamani- what happy ecstasies are enjoy'd by those.

What happy ecstasies do those enjoy
Who chant the name of Rama nectar-like!
All those that conquer self and love the Lord
Sita, and great Sita, who combines sweet
Ambrosia of *Swara, Raga and Laya*
With early sugar of the name of Ram!

XV Upacharamulanu-Accept my service Ram, while on Sesha!

Accept my service Ram, while on Sesha
With dress of lightning rays, O hero of world!
Thou art to give the boons to lives on earth!
While under gold umbrella deck'd with gems,
And while the gold-handl'd deck'd with gems,
Soft shining rays of Moon shine, sweet, milk-like
And fans of grandeur wafting breeze of scent
From flowers sampangi, jasmine; from root Kuru;

And leaves maruvamu aromatic;
Thy sport to save the world appears complete¹

XVI Unnathavuna-The thunder, rain, and wind have drawn the boat.

The thunder, rain and wind have drawn the boat
To wilderness of waters of Jamuna deep
And sprung a leak with water surging in
Our pride has taken us to impending death
And dissolution grave! O friends, now pray
To Lord Sri Krishna to save us in time!

XVII Undedhi Ramudu-There is one God, O mind, don't waver once!

There is one God, O mind, don't waver once!
Free from lust weak, He lives in zone of Sun,
And shines with equity, munificence!
To thy savant Thou art in depth of heart.

XVIII Etulabrothuvo-How wilt Thou save me, O Ram, divine?

How wilt Thou save me, O Ram, divine!
O God! My tale is full of woes and griefs!
I ate my food like beasts and roam'd in vain!
I had extoll'd the misers born with guilt!
I had wrought deeds of sin with wicked souls!

XIX Ennaga manasuku-The eyes are set to see Thy form alone!

The eyes are set to see Thy form alone!
The body is to embrace Thy azure build!
The hands exist for floral worship of Thee!
The tongue knows but to sing Thy praise alone!

XX Evarani nirnainchiri ra-How have souls great identified Thee, Ram?

How have souls great identified Thee Ram?
Art Thou Siva, or Vishnu or Brahma?
Siva and Vishnu in communion give
One Ram! My salutations to souls great
That know this merge and then proclaim this truth!

XXI Epaniko-My birth has purpose of chants, songs and praised.

My birth has purpose of chants, songs, and praise
Of Thee O Ram! Sage Valmiki has sung
Thy life as nonpareil, but devotees Thine
Have solace in "Ram naam" which do accept!

XXII Entani ne-How shall I sing description of the luck.

How shall I sing description of the luck
Of Sabari divine, supreme, and bless'd,
For she fed Rama with fruit rare and saw
His form to fill, and liberation gain'd!

XXIII Oka mata-O mind! Remember Rama for one word.

O mind! remember Rama for one word,
One arrow sure, and one wife Sita chaste!
He has one mind exemplary and firm!
He grants immortality, eternity!

XXIV Kadale vadu-O Rama Thou are still in pace supreme!

O Rama Thou art still in peace supreme!
Almighty, Thou, hast sway ov'r storm and strife!
All things take root from Thee, but Thou hast not
A start or end; and artifice is not
With Thee: but art creator mystical!
Thou under serpent's hood, and floating safe!

XXV Giripai nelakonna-Seen with my eyes, God Ram, on Bhadradi.

Seen with my eyes God Ram on Bhadradi,
The mount, from where the vision came to me
In all His regal splendour high! I tried
To speak to Him overawed, but Ram said thus

“Thou shalt reach me but after ten days sure!”

XXVI Gitardhamu-The meaning of the Gita and the joy

The meaning of the Gita and the joy
Of Godly songs are seen in thee, O mind!
Secrets of religious faiths and Gods
Are known to Hanuman, who prays unique!
The theme of my songs in one with Gita!

XXVII Chakkani raja-There is path royal open to Thee, mind!

There is path royal open to thee, mind!
Why then go by the lanes that are obscene?
Milk sweet and cream are now within the reach;
Why then drink wine that does intoxicate?
Siva does chant the name of Ram, my God!
The song divine of Ram is regal path!

XXVIII Gnana mosaga rade-Give me the purity of God-thought, O Ram!

Give me the purity of God-thought, O Ram!
Devotion to Thee, O Ram, has clear'd my mind.
The self in me and self-divine are one
And it is in the sages and cosmos great!

XXIX Tera teyaga rada-Venkataramana! Remove the blind.

Venkataramana! Remove the blind
Of egoism in me that stands between!
The ego is cloud that prevents the bliss!
It is like fly that sits of food serv'd fresh!
It is like mind on filth while thinking of God!
It is like hungry fish that gets caught sore!
It is like curtain hiding the lamp lit!
It is like deer entangling in the noose!
Remove the veil and bless me with Thy grace!

XXX Dwaitamu sukhama-Of Dwaita, which gives the bliss?

Of Dwaita, Adwaita, which gives the bliss?
The sky, the wind, the Sun, the world are all
Like Siva, Vishnu, Brahma showing one!
Thus one divine exists in cosmic forms!

XXXI Naya momu-Thy smiling face is missing long, O Ram!

Thy smiling face is missing long, O Ram!
Come forgetting all discussion, distance long!

Thou elevated Mount Govardhana as boon!
Have Thy attendants spoken ill of me?
Can't Garuda run fast with Thee to me?
Or does he find the distance too far?
Descend at once! Appeal from me can go
To none but Thee, the ruler of the world!

XXXII Nannu palimpa-Did Thou reach down on foot to Thy savant?

Did Thou reach down on foot to Thy savant?
My life exists to pray to Thee, O Ram,
Sweet, lotus-eyed, with hue of Indra's gem blue!
Descend with Sita now, adorned with chains
Of pearls, and bow, in halo glorious!

XXXII Nada loludai-Ragas and swaras seven, their yields

Ragas and swaras seven and their yields
Are dedicat'd through Nadam to Thee Ram,
By Gods and they gained the bliss supreme!
O mind, my path is set to sing to Ram!

XXXIV Nada thanu Nadam, the essence of Sama Veda.

Nadam, the essence of Sama Veda
Reflects Lord Sankara who has faces five,
Which yield Swaras seven and to Him
I bow as one who realises this truth becomes
Immortal and attains commune divine!

XXXV Nadu pie palikeru-The people speak of me that I divide.

The people speak of me that I divide
The joy of our home sweet and have designs!
The happiness of world is ice-like and
The wealth I spurn'd, and never shared lucre base!
I have a home that has Thy festive days!
My mind knows not eyes glees of those in glee
And never planned homes of ideologies!
I care not for this flesh, and honour was
My aim, and my joy perpetual!
The path of poverty I choose to live,
And never praised men to fill the stomach small!

XXXVI Nija marmamulanu-O Lord! why tempt those that know the inner truths?

O Lord! why tempt those who know inner truths?
The trinity is one; not varying forces!
This puzzle has occurred to saints and kings
All this is mystic cosmos and Thy sport!

XXXVII Nidhi chala-The family with wealth shall not excel.

The family with wealth shall not excel
The service at the feet of Ram, divine!
Will feed of milk or curd or butter churn's
Excel in taste ambrosia of Thy name?
Control of thought and word and deed is like
A bath in Ganges sacred, and where then
Compares the sinning man with his mud baths?
Does happiness reside in human praise?
O mind, Ram's praise is happiness in truth!

XXXVIII Ne nendu vedhakudura-And now where shall I search for Thee, O God?

And now where shall I search for Thee, O Ram?
Thou hast turn'd ears deaf to Thy son, four-faced
God Brahma, but appeared to him when pure!
One who has to evolve in mind and speech,
And form, shall wait to get the bliss of God!

XXXIX Padavi ne-Devotion to Ram attains status high!

Devotion to Ram attains status high!
The truth, not understood, of epic lore,
Prosperity with wife and sons and wealth,
The patronage of kings with gifts of gold,
The winning of the world by practices base,
Accumulations of goods from rituals,
Do not enhance the status of human folk!
Realising of Ram is status starry high!

XL Padavi ne-Devotion to Ram attains status high!

Take not Thy grip from me O Ram! Take not!
From birth I cling to Thee, and Thou hast shown
To me the permanent from transient ones,
The right from wrong; O keep thy grip on me!

XLI. Bhuvini dosuda ne-Did I with avarice give vent to lies?

Did I with avarice give vent to lies?
Did I cheat others or wend to ways wrong?
Did I express my sorrow or joy to any?
Bathe me in milk or water cold, but save !

Did I with avarice give vent to lies?
Did I cheat others or wend to ways wrong?
Did I express my sorrow or joy to any?
Bathe me in milk or water cold, but save!

XLII Manasa etulo-O mind, bear with to devote to Ram!

O mind, bear with me to devote to Ram!
Ram's praise is duty pleasant, day and night;
And lust and love must go far from my mind!
Show me the road that gives salvation soon!

XLIII Manasu nilpa-When mind is not on God, how then can bells.

When mind is not on God, how then can bells
Of sound sweet, grand, make worship true, serene!
The man with thoughts impure has holy baths,
But can the acts salvation bring to him?
If with of sage lends mind to paramours
How can he then claim heaven in all bliss?
One still with lust and spit may penance do,
But God shall not steer him to His abode!

XLIV Manasu swadheena-The man who wins ov'r mind needs none of chants!

The man who wins ov'r mind needs none of chants!
The man who sees the soul distinct from flesh
Needs none of meditative practice strict!
And that sees as Thine in all the world
Needs none evolutionary for bliss of God!
The mind knows women are enticing ones!
The man who lives one with the Lord from birth
Has no concern of the events or time!
O Ram, do come to my abode and stay!
Preach life ideal to devotees and shine!
I hold to Thee and feast on Thy smiles sweet!
Thou art my hope and I await Thy call,
Affectionate, spontaneous and sure!

XLV Rara ma inti daka-O Ram, do come to my abode and stay!

O Ram, do come to my abode and stay !
Preach life ideal to devotees and shine !
I hold to Thee and feast on Thy smiles sweet!
Thou art my hope and I await thy call,
Affectionate, spontaneous and sure

XLVI Lalite Sri - Lalita, seat of beauty, wisdom.

Lalita, seat of beauty, wisdom and
Prosperity! I am a boy and Thou
As mother pardon me; I bow to Thee!
Thy brother Ram doth mercy show to me!

XLVII Vara sikhi-Subrahmanya, with seat on peacock, fair.

Subrahmanya, with seat on peacock fair,

And lotus-eyed, and of beauty exquisite
And bless'd with qualities supreme and divine,
And praised by lesser gods and famed to kill
The `asuras' with gift of Siva's power!
A son to Parvati and nephew to
Sri Ram; I bow to Thee, and pray for bliss!

XLVIII Santamu leka-No happiness exists without the peace.

No happiness exists without the peace
Of mind, though bless'd with wife and children sweet,
And wealth, and grain, and with prosperity;
And even with saints austere or men with lore!

XLIX Sri Narada-O Narada! To lotus of Nadam Thou art.

O Narada! to lotus of Nadam thou art
The bee to taste the nectar sweet! Thou art
The saviour of the poor! As moon with rays
Of love, thou art at hearts of lesser gods,
To banish grief, and to sing to veena
That has the sanction of the Vedas pure.
To Krishna dear; Thou art in bliss for ev'r!
Sage great, protect me, humble at thy feet!
Devotion saturating music sweet
Is path right royal to reach God. O mind!
The saints and lesser gods walked in this path!
Injustice, justice, and ephemeral
Existence in the world are known to me!
O mind! my songs shall run devoted to Ram!

L Sangita gnanamu-Devotion saturating music sweet.

Devotion saturating music sweet
Is path right royal to reach God, O Mind!
The saints and lesser gods walked in this path!
Injustice, justice, and ephemeral!
Existence in the world are to me!
O Mind! My songs shall run devoted to Ram!

LI Seethamma ma yamma-My mother Sita, and my father Ram.

My mother Sita, and my father Ram,
Take me to Thy home divine and high!
Thy friends in avatars, Thy brothers, saints,
Who sing Thy glory are my kith and kin.

LII Kshinami Tiruga-One death leads to one more rebirth, O mind!

One death leads to one more rebirth, O mind!
Different paths achieve salvation
Of life austere, but not from births repeat'd!

All bliss is had free from rebirths, O mind,
By dedication complete to Ram!

LIII Intakanna Ananda-To sing and pray it teams before the Lord.

To sing and pray in teams before the Lord,
In peace, forgetting frames of flesh, and see
Thy forms in world is realisation true,
And joy, in full, that excels mundane mirth!

LIV Elavataramu-O Rama! Why hast Thou come down to earth?

O Rama! why hast Thou come down to earth?
Is Thy rare incarnation to rule land?
Is it to war or give Thy bliss to saints,
Or save the sinning crowd or give a boon
To Thy devotee whose songs contain `Ram naam`!

LV Raghunayaka-I hold Thy lotus feet for ev'r O Ram!

I hold Thy lotus feet for ev'r, O Ram!
Help me to steer clear of sin and cross
The sea of life; and take me to Thy home,
O Rama, saviour, and protector prompt!

LVI Sudha madhurya bhashana-Thy name ambrosia-like and nectar-rich.

Thy name ambrosia-like, and nectar-rich,
Appeased my hunger and desires of life!
Far from lives sinful and with men suave
My life is run and in the joy of Ram!
O God, appear and speak mellifluous.

LVII Valla gadanaka-Say not nay Sita! Save thy servant soon!

Say not nay, Sita! Save this singer soon!
Avatars Thine are proof of Godly acts.
In pillar; and behind a tree; as a babe
In arms of Yasoda; as saviour of
Muchukundu; and to protect the sages
In penance, and in forests thick, Ram comes!
In eras with ascent of sin, the Lord
Descends to fell the wrong, and plant the right!

LVIII Rama abhirma-O Rama! Lotus-eyed, I love Thee full!

O Rama, lotus-eyed, I love Thee full!
Take pity, for my heart expects return
Of love from Thee with satiation full!
Thou art my saviour and resort for ev'r!

LIX Neke teliyaka-It Thou know it not, what can I do then?

If Thou know it not, what can I do then?
Thou art supporter of the world! In me
Is burning love for Thee as where I see
And talk, and serve, and pray, there is God Ram!

LX Vadera-O mind! He is the God who keeps His words?

O mind! He is the God who keeps His words!
Eternal fame is His by deeds divine!
To rule the world, the save the good, and mend
The wicked ones, O Ram, Thou hast the form
Of man with bow and arrows famed for might!
To cross the sea of life, and light the path
Of bliss, O Ram, Thou art on Siva's lips!
Accept my offerings! I now know Thee!

LXI Amma ravamma-Come mother Tulsi, to me as I adore.

Come mother Tulsi, to me as I adore
And trust Thee firm, for liberation soon!
Thy light and lustre make Thy Lord and my
Friend sweet, place Thee high in His heart's esteem!

LXII Kanta judume-O Rama! cost Thy look on me but once.

O Ram! Cast Thy look sweet on me but once!
The wrongs have fled from me, Thy poor devotee!
As Lakshmana press's his hands on Thy feet soft,
Thou looked at Sita and spoke sweet and he
Then felt Thy bliss! Thus look at me but once!

LXIII Teliya leri Rama-The path of true devotees is missed by those.

The path of true devotees is missed by those
Who dream and wander wide and with no aim!
They bathe, and dress, and chant, but seek for gold,
And they have lost the goal of Rama's grace!

LXIV Ela ni daya radu-Delay not Ram! Shed mercy now on me!

Delay not Ram! Shed mercy now on me!
Thy form of azure hue and golden glow,
And dignity deep, ocean-like; and with
Face lotus-like; with Sun and Moon as eyes;
And adorn'd with rare jewels, flowers and gems
And arrows sure; and praised by Gods supreme:
Siva, Indra, Hanuman and Thy son
Brahma and saints who stand in bliss of Thine!

Reclining on Sesha, or riding on
The king of birds, and detach'd from Raga,
And lit with halo bright, and shedding love;
The source of vedas, Upanishads; and foe
Of sin and sinning asuras, Thou art!

LXV Emanatichevvo-What is Thy mind? What is judgement Thine?

What is Thy mind? What is judgment Thine?
Thou hast to give birth chaste, life long, name, fame,
The peace of mind; deviation to Ram!
Hear me, and I trust Thee! What is my fate?
Is within my humble reach to serve
Ram worshipped by souls great in grandeur high?
Thou art seat'd on king serpent glorified!
Sages Narada, Tumburu sing Thy praises;
Sage Ambarisha chants Thy name in joy;
The women angelic dance at Thy feet
The jasmine flowers rain and flavour Thee;
Rare paragons of beauty fan to tunes
Of jingling bangles on their arms fair;
Indra and Brahma hail Thy titles famed;
The azure form with jewels and gems, shines
With smiles on face, Moon like, ador'd and sweet!
I overwhelming joy Sita sees Thee
In glory, and in cradle, put to rest!
As son of Ram, divine, may Thy devotee
Have change to rock Thy cradle and to sing
Thy praise as king of kings; the foe of sin;
And fountain of perfection and love!

LXVI Dorakuna ituvanti seva-Is it within my humble reach to serve.

It is within my humble reach to serve
Ram worshipp'd by souls great in grandeur high?
Thou art seat'd on king serpent glorified!
Sages Narada, Tumburu sing Thy praises;
Sage Ambarisha chants Thy name in joy;
The women angelic dance at Thy feet
The jasmine flowers rain and flavour Thee;
Rare paragons of beauty fan to tunes
Of jingling bangles on their arms fair;
Indra and Brahma hail Thy titles famed;
Thy azure form with jewels and gems, shines
With smiles on face, Moon like, ador'd and sweet!
In overwhelming joy Sita sees Thee
In glory, and in cradle, put to rest!
As son of ram, divine, may Thy devotee
Have chance to rock Thy cradle and to sing
Thy praise as king of kings; foe of sin;
And fountain of perfection and love!

LXVII Loke vana chathura-Protector of the cosmos great! Protect.

Protector of the cosmos great! Protect
Me now! Thou ruler of Ayodhya, O Ram!
Thy charm is great as man and as God rare!
Thy mellow face as shining Moon in full
Thy frame of azure hue and dress'd with silks
That glow as rising Sun, and with the bow
And arrows famed for might, and as a fish
Began the avatars to end in ten!
Thou art mysterious Ram! Show Thou to me!
Thou earn'd the homage from the saints and Thou
Dispell'd the curse of Ahalya with touch
Of Thy feet sacr'd and; now save me soon!

LXVIII Najivadhara-O spark divine of life in me that lives!

O spark divine of life in me that lives!
The fruit of penance done in births of old!
O! light of life! It is in me! It rules
The cosmos great creat'd by hands divine!

LXIX Evaritho ne-To whom shall I tell my tale of woe?

To whom shall I tell my tale of woe?
The songs of Ram in teams has brought a pain!
Try carve Ganesha but get Hanuman!
Thou foe of sin! Show me the path of light!

LXX Mundu venuka-Ram! Follow us, both fore and rear, as guards.

Ram! follow us, both fore and rear, as guards
And keep beside Thee Lakshmana bold! come quick!
As victors ov'r the asuras; to soothe
As Moon from Solar race of valour famed!
Come down with bows and arrows sharp, as Thou
Came down to save Gajendra in distress!
Thou loving Thy savants and living in
The Om, come now to help and escort us!

LXXI Paritapamu kani-The golden boat was in the Sarayu.

The golden boat was in the Sarayu,
And Ram and Sita were in it, in peace.
Then Thou, in pity said to me: "I will
Take thee to me in ten days prompt, but wait!"
Did Thou forget Thy words to me in pain?

LXXII Aparadhamula mannpi -Give me Thy pardon kind and draw me near!

Give me Thy pardon kind and draw me near!
Pride, hate, spite, and deceit were traits in me,
And I abused devotees all pure and suave!
I had designs with men immoral and
Put on a show and coat of worship false!
O Ram! excuse my faults, profusing Thy
Sweet mercy on this sinner poor and save!

Dear reader,

My purpose is achieved if you have developed a desire to appreciate the spiritual bearing of the devotional lines written above. The original kritis and kirtanas are so exquisite that I have found it extremely difficult to bring out their full force into my humble rendering. That is the reason for my picking out only some of the great kirtanas of the saint for my translation into the shape of iambic pentameter.

*Birth, Growth, and Death are steps on steep of Life!
The Path of Saints is lit by Toil and Joy
And Shines by Communion of Soul with God.
Tyagaraja Won Bliss by Songs Divine!*